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SAYS USSR STOPS GRAIN SHIPMENTS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Since Czechoslovakia has procrastinated in fulfilling her obligations of providing machinery to the USSR, the latter has stopped grain shipments to Czechoslovakia. Reliable sources in Prague report that this development was directly responsible for the unexpected rise in bread and flour prices in Czechoslovakia. The price of one kilogram of coarse flour increased from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 crowns. The price of one kilogram of fine flour increased from 13 to 21 crowns; and that of one kilogram of bread, from 5 to 8 crowns.

The Czechoslovak government officially announced that these price increases were caused by the improvement of the quality of the flour. The government newspaper Rude Pravo announced that "the sale of only one kind of bread and flour was bound to result in waste, whereas now the sale of various grades of bread and flour will lead to greater thrift." This statement proves that the new increase in prices actually indicates that the Czechoslovak government contemplates decreasing bread consumption by increasing bread and flour prices.

The new situation also caused the public to become aware of the fact that the official Czechoslovak press for some time has discontinued praising the contributions made by the USSR toward Czechoslovak food supplies. In addition, it was 'disclosed that not only did the USSR stop grain shipments, but even recalled one shipment which was already en route.

Through such revengeful means, the USSR demonstrated her wrath against Czechoslovakia for having decided to fulfill machinery and precision instrument export obligations in 1950 to the Western countries in exchange for raw materials.

It is reported also that Moscow demanded the dismissal of Augustin Kliment, Minister of Heavy Industry in Czechoslovakia, but President Gottwald refused to comply. Antonin Zapotocky, Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, wanted to go to Moscow to clarify the situation, but the Soviet Ambassador in Prague "requested" him to wait until invited.

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Since it is impossible to explain to the population the real reason for the bread shortage, the Czechoslovak government now blames the rich peasants and the food hoarders for it.

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In fact, the government proposed a drastic law which exacts a penalty of 25 years' imprisonment for food hoarders. A food hoarder is defined as a person who has in his possession more than 4 kilograms of flour, or 3 kilograms of fats, or 5 kilograms of sugar.

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